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ABSTRACT

Half of a two-part English Language Arts Achievement Test, this test evaluates reading skills in Grade 6. It contains general instructions for the student, and 50 multiple choice questions on nine readings (two poems and seven stories). (SR)

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ED297353

GRADE 6 ACHIEVEMENT TEST

English Language Arts

Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice)

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June 1988

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GRADE 6 ACHIEVEMENT TEST
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

PART B: Reading (Multiple Choice)

This test asks you to read some stories and poems, and answer questions about what you have read. There are nine reading selections and 50 questions on this test.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Read each story or poem carefully.
- Read each question carefully.
- On the answer sheet mark the BEST answer by filling in circle A, B, C, or D with an HB pencil.
- Remember that there is only ONE CORRECT or BEST answer for each question.
- Be sure that the number on your answer sheet is the same as the number of the question.
- Be sure that your answer can be easily seen. If you make a mistake, erase your first mark COMPLETELY and fill in the correct circle.
- Try to answer each question. If you cannot answer a question, go on to the next question.
- To help you answer the questions, every fifth line of the passages is numbered.

NOW LOOK AT THE EXAMPLE

1. A rose is

   A. a fruit
   B. a flower
   C. an animal
   D. an automobile

Answer Sheet

	A	B	C	D
1.	○	●	○	○

YOU MAY NOT USE A DICTIONARY OR THESAURUS.

YOUR TEACHER WILL TELL YOU WHEN TO BEGIN.

YOU WILL HAVE 60 MINUTES TO COMPLETE THE TEST.

I. Read the story below and answer questions 1 to 6.

from THE WILD DUCK'S NEST

In the morning Colin was up and away to school. After a mile or so he was joined by Paddy McFall. As he joined his companion he said eagerly: "Paddy, I've a nest — a wild duck's with one egg."

"And how do you know it's a wild duck's?" asked Paddy, slightly jealous.

"Sure I saw her with my own two eyes, her brown speckled back with a crow's patch on it, and her yellow legs—"

"I suppose it's a tame duck's you have or maybe an old gull's."

Colin put out his tongue at him. "A lot you know!" he said, "for a gull's egg has spots and this one is greenish-white, for I held it."

And then the words he didn't want to hear rushed from Paddy in a mocking chant, "You had it in your hand! . . . She'll forsake it! She'll forsake it!" he said, skipping along the road before him.

His mind told him that Paddy was right, but somehow he couldn't give in to it and he replied: "She'll not forsake it! I know she'll not!"

But in school his faith wavered. Through the windows he could see moving sheets of rain and his mind filled with thoughts of the lake creased and chilled by wind; and the egg cold as a cave stone. At last they were out in the rain, Colin rushing as fast as he could.

The boy reached the islet, his heart thumping with excitement. He went slowly, quietly, on to the strip of land that led to the nest. And then every muscle tautened. She was there, her shoulders hunched up, and her bill lying on her breast as if she were asleep. Colin's heart hammered wildly in his ears. She hadn't forsaken. He was about to turn stealthily away. Something happened. The bird moved, her neck straightened, twitching nervously from side to side. The wild duck with a panicky flapping, rose heavily, and flew off towards the sea. . . . A guilty silence enveloped the boy. . . . He turned to go away, hesitated, and glanced back at the bare nest; it'd be no harm to have a look. Timidly he approached it. There in the nest lay two eggs. He drew in his breath with delight, splashed quickly from the island, and ran off whistling in the rain.

Michael McLaverty

1. Colin knows that the egg is a wild duck's egg because it is

   A. yellow
   B. spotted
   C. greenish-white
   D. brown speckled

2. Paddy says that the duck will abandon her egg because

   A. the duck is a tame duck
   B. the duck saw Colin
   C. the weather is cold
   D. Colin touched it

3. Why does Colin not want to hear Paddy say "She'll forsake it" (line 11)?

   A. He does not believe Paddy.
   B. He knows his friend is jealous.
   C. He knows Paddy might be right.
   D. He does not want to be criticized.

4. At school, Colin's "faith wavered" (line 15) when he

   A. repeated Paddy's words
   B. noticed the cold weather
   C. wanted to check the nest
   D. wanted to be out in the rain

5. After the wild duck flies away, Colin approaches the nest timidly (line 27) because he is

   A. afraid that the egg will not be in the nest
   B. worried that the wild duck will attack him
   C. afraid that the wild duck might see him
   D. worried that the egg will have hatched

6. After Colin checks the nest (line 28), he feels

   A. guilty
   B. relieved
   C. important
   D. frightened

TURN THE PAGE

II. Read the information below and answer questions 7 to 12.

from BELLS, BELLS, BELLS

When ancient man banged two pieces of metal together and found that he liked the sound, he started a trend. Now, thousands of years later, people all over the world are still enjoying the music of bells.

Historians tell us that the Chinese used bells as long ago as 4000 B.C., so the known story of bells goes back almost six thousand years.

The people of the Orient liked to decorate their temples and pagodas with bells that gave out a delicate, tinkling sound on the slightest breeze.

In ancient Greece and Rome, bells were hung on the tombs of kings, and they also formed part of the equipment of war. Sentries in the Greek army rang a handbell when they made their rounds upon the ramparts of a fortress. Bells made good warning signals. Once, when the Romans had laid siege to a town, several townspeople tried to escape by diving into the nearby river and swimming away; but they were stopped by the sound of bells. The Romans had cleverly stretched bells on nets across the river, so that anyone trying to escape by swimming would set the bells to ringing.

From Biblical times on, bells were used to decorate clothing. Persian women wore bells on their ankles, and in other parts of the world some high-born ladies wore little bells at their waists or decorated their high-heeled, curved shoes with a bell on each pointed toe. Hence we have the well-known Mother Goose rhyme:

Rings on her fingers
and bells on her toes,
And she shall have music
wherever she goes.

Bernadine Bailey

7. The phrase "ancient man," as it is used in line 1, means

A. old man
B. early man
C. mature man
D. civilized man

8. The description in lines 6 and 7 suggests that the people of the Orient liked

A. loud ringing sounds
B. bright decorations
C. ancient history
D. gentle sounds

9. In ancient Greece and Rome, bells were used as valuable tools for

A. war
B. peace
C. tombs
D. temples

10. Loud, clanging bells would have been BEST suited for

A. giving warning signals
B. hanging on kings' tombs
C. decorating pagodas and temples
D. wearing on shoes with pointed toes

11. The townspeople (line 12) were prevented from escaping into the river by the sound of

A. handbells
B. temple bells
C. bells on nets
D. bells on their ankles

12. The Mother Goose nursery rhyme (lines 20-23) refers to times when bells were used for

A. travel
B. warning
C. excitement
D. decoration

TURN THE PAGE

III. Read the story below and answer questions 13 to 18.

from NISEEMISS

Sally followed Duncan's tracks down the lonely river. It was tough going. The hard crust under the topping of new snow kept breaking beneath her, and the wind was rising. Duncan was nearly at the rapid, down where the river narrowed and open water flowed, jet black against the snow.

"Oh, come on, Sally!" She could barely hear his shout against the wind. "It's getting worse. It'll be dark soon — hurry up!" Half running, Sally stumbled along the river and up the bank. She couldn't hold him up. After all, she'd pleaded so hard to come out on the trapline with him. She was just through the willow thicket when a howling blast of wind knocked her to her knees.

And suddenly there was Duncan running toward her, shouting. "Back! Go back!" But his words were lost. An ear-splitting crack filled the forest as a giant poplar shuddered, swayed and slowly toppled sideways. Towards the path, toward Duncan . . .

"Duncan, behind you!" Sally screamed. The tree slammed down, hurling ice, snow, branches. Another tree cracked somewhere, then another.

She raced along the path to the fallen tree and the bundle pinned beneath it in the snow.

"Duncan, are you . . . ?" No sound.

Start thinking, Sally, she told herself. The tree's too heavy to shift. Maybe I can chop it through with the axe. No, no, that would take too long. Just a minute, there must be lots of snow under him. That's it. I don't move the tree, I'll dig beneath it and slide him out.

Moving fast now, Sally smashed through the ice crust with the axe, then burrowed like an animal. Ice and snow flew as she tunneled deeper and deeper until she reached him.

"Duncan, are you all right? Can you move?"

His eyes flicked open. "Good girl, Sally. Good girl."

Moving the empty toboggan as close as possible to Duncan, Sally somehow rolled him on. She wrapped him in blankets, then, straining at the tumpline, pulled him down the path to the willow thicket, where she set to work. First she cleared a circle in the snow and filled it with spruce boughs. Then, spreading the buffalo robe on top, she eased Duncan onto the soft bed. By the time it was dark she had built a lean-to big enough for both of them.

Now for the fire — carefully she worked with flint, steel, tinder, flakes of bark and twigs. And at last it was lit — beautiful, beautiful fire.

She cut more wood, filled the kettle at the rapid, and boiled some pemmican. She'd skin the beavers they'd taken and she could snare rabbits and catch birds and fish.

She looked closely at her brother. It was two days' normal walk back home to the post at Lac La Ronge. But she couldn't pull him there, he was much too heavy. So she must keep him warm, dry and fed until someone came. Gently she crept among the blankets, snuggling next to him. His arm moved round her, pulling her close. "Niseemiss." He spoke in Cree, their mother's tongue. "Niseemiss — My Little Sister." He was quiet for a time, then he murmured, "You were right this morning, Niseemiss. We shouldn't have tried to get home during this storm."

Tony German

13. Duncan shouted to Sally "'Back! Go back!' " (lines 10-11) because

A. they were on the wrong trail
B. he was afraid she would drown
C. he was afraid she would get lost
D. they needed to get away from the trees

14. Before Sally could free Duncan, she had to

A. run and get help
B. think of a plan
C. make a fire
D. warn him

15. Sally didn't chop the tree in half to free Duncan because

A. it would take too long
B. she might hurt Duncan
C. she didn't have an axe
D. it was too cold and windy

16. A "lean-to" (line 33) is a

A. distress signal
B. toboggan
C. shelter
D. bed

17. The detailed descriptions of Sally's activities in lines 28 to 38 MAINLY EMPHASIZE that she is

A. capable and clear-thinking
B. excited and showing off
C. frightened and tired
D. cold and hungry

18. Why does Duncan call Sally "Niseemiss" in line 43?

A. He is sorry that he brought her along.
B. He is proud of what she has done.
C. He thinks of her as a little girl.
D. He is teasing her.

TURN THE PAGE

IV. Read the poem below and answer questions 19 to 24.

HIDDEN THINGS

Under the sea, the silver sea,
the limitless, glittering, blue-green sea,
are treasures hid:
for there amid the swaying weed,
where fishes skim and corals breed,
are flowers strange;
and sea beasts range
in pasture hidden under the sea.

Under the ground, the common ground,
the piled-up, mountainous, tree-grown ground,
are treasures hid:
for there amid the rocks so old
lie pools of oil and veins of gold —
the precious stores
of metal ores
in places hidden under the ground.

Lucy Sprague Mitchell

19. The idea of movement in verse one is MOST CLEARLY expressed by the word

A. "limitless" (line 2)
B. "glittering" (line 2)
C. "swaying" (line 4)
D. "hidden" (line 8)

20. The phrase "sea beasts range" (line 7) means that the sea beasts

A. remain
B. roam
C. rush
D. rest

21. In verse one the setting is the sea; in verse two the setting is the

A. rocks
B. pools
C. ground
D. mountains

22. The "treasures" in line 3 are similar to the "treasures" in line 11 because they are both

A. limitless
B. concealed
C. in the sea
D. under the ground

23. The "veins of gold" (line 13) lie

A. amid the rocks
B. in pools of oil
C. amid the weeds
D. in hidden pastures

24. The difference between the treasures under the sea and the treasures under the ground is that the treasures under the sea are

A. valuable
B. alive
C. rare
D. old

TURN THE PAGE

V. Read the story below and answer questions 25 to 29.

from THE VANDARIAN INCIDENT

Tyler is visiting his friend, Selbe, on her planet, Selgel.

By dawn the tilgrass had given way entirely to softer green grasses that reminded Tyler of his parents' back yard. The land was dotted with dwarf trees and prickly shrubs, which in places formed a sparse forest. The vegetation was stunted, but after the unrelieved barrenness of the planet Tilyel it seemed almost lush here.

Shortly after daybreak Tyler and Selbe heard the unmistakable whine of a gotlo. Instinctively they stepped away from the sound, but after a few paces Selbe stopped. She turned and retraced her steps, watching the grass carefully. Even so, she was almost upon the creature before she finally saw it. Her brows were knit in concentration. She had never captured a gotlo, although some of her classmates claimed to have done so. It was considered a foolish game.

"What are you doing?" asked Tyler in a puzzled tone.

She signalled for silence and began to circle the lizard to her left. Like Earth lizards, the gotlo did not turn its head but followed her movement by rotating its eyes. When she was within striking distance, Selbe froze. A minute passed, two, three. Still she did not move.

Tyler could only look on, puzzled and anxious. He didn't know what Selbe was up to, and for a moment he was afraid she had finally cracked under the pressure. But he had come to respect the Selgelian girl in the brief time since they had been together, and he trusted her to know what she was doing.

Suddenly the whistle of the gotlo faded. Selbe knew the lizard had ceased to think of her as a living being and had accepted her frozen form as a fixed part of the landscape.

Selbe lunged. The creature was in her hand and helpless before it had time to move. It began to whine again, but it was held fast and could do no more than wave its four legs in impotent rage.

Selbe looked towards Tyler for the first time since the hunt had begun. Unexpectedly she grinned.

"Well," she said lightly, "aren't you going to help me tie this thing up?"

She held the gotlo carefully while Tyler wound a bandage from his survival belt around its jaws, covering the eyes but not the nostrils. Once the lizard was temporarily blinded in this manner it ceased struggling. Selbe slipped it into a compartment of her own belt.

"Now perhaps you'll tell me why you did that," said Tyler, "just so I'll know you're not crazy."

Selbe looked embarrassed.

"I'm not really sure," she admitted, "Intuition? Somehow I just knew it was the right thing to do."

"Selgelians!" snorted Tyler in an exasperated tone. "Intuition!"

Martyn Godfrey

25. The phrase that MOST CLEARLY tells the reader that Tyler is on an alien planet is

A. "reminded Tyler of his parents' back yard" (line 2)
B. "dwarf trees and prickly shrubs" (lines 2-3)
C. "she was almost upon the creature" (line 9)
D. "Like Earth lizards" (lines 13-14)

26. "Selbe heard the unmistakable whine of a gotlo" (lines 6-7). A "gotlo" is

A. a Selgelian lizard
B. a Tilyelian lizard
C. a Tilgrass lizard
D. an Earth lizard

27. Why did Selbe remain motionless for so long when she was close to the gotlo (lines 15-16)?

A. She wanted the gotlo to ignore her presence.
B. She needed to decide what to do next.
C. She was frightened of the gotlo.
D. She wanted Tyler to watch her.

28. Tyler has confidence in Selbe when she is stalking the gotlo (lines 17-20) because he

A. knows she has done this before
B. has known her a long time
C. is afraid of her
D. trusts her

29. Selbe's actions and reactions in this story illustrate her

A. foolishness
B. thoughtlessness
C. self-confidence
D. sense of humor

TURN THE PAGE

VI. Read the biography below and answer questions 30 to 34.

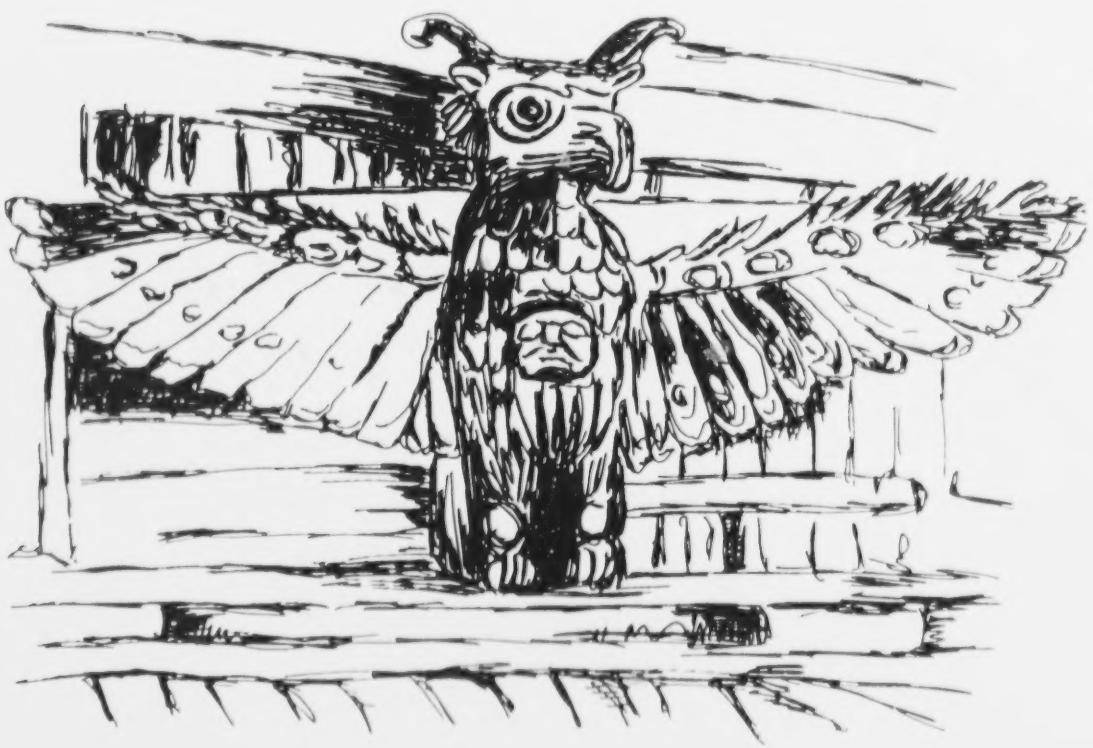
EMILY CARR

One of the greatest of all Canadian artists, Emily Carr was 70 years old before her talent was widely recognized. For much of her life the few people who knew her thought of her as a batty eccentric who ran a boarding house in Victoria and kept a collection of dogs and assorted animals. Taking easel and paints, she used to go off alone into the forests, returning with strange pictures of the Indian villages she had visited. Her style was far in advance of her times and not at all popular. Instead of making careful reproductions of what she saw, she painted what she felt about what she saw.

It seemed that only the Coast Indians appreciated Emily Carr or her work. To them, she was Klee Wyck, "the laughing one," a friendly woman who showed great interest in their culture. They hung her paintings in their houses, where they attracted the attention of an anthropologist who was studying Coast Indian customs. He arranged for her work to be shown at an exhibition in Ottawa.

Well into her fifties by this time, Emily Carr was introduced to members of the Group of Seven and at last she was praised by her fellow artists. In 1941 she won a Governor General's Award for her book *Klee Wyck*. The publication of this book made Canadians aware of Emily Carr and her powerful paintings.

Charlotta Hacker



30. Before Emily Carr was famous, the people in Victoria thought of her as

A. the woman who lived alone
B. a strange, unusual person
C. a talented artist
D. Klee Wyck

31. Emily Carr's works were first appreciated by the

A. Governor General
B. Canadian public
C. Group of Seven
D. Coast Indians

32. "Klee Wyck" means

A. a batty eccentric (line 3)
B. the Coast Indians (line 9)
C. the laughing one (line 10)
D. a Governor General's Award (line 16)

33. The "Group of Seven" (line 15) are seven famous Canadian painters. What happened when Emily Carr was introduced to this group?

A. They became friends.
B. They praised her work.
C. She was able to travel to Ottawa.
D. She saw what great painters they were.

34. Emily Carr's art is unusual because it illustrates

A. her animals
B. her feelings
C. Indian villages
D. the coastal forests

TURN THE PAGE

VII. Read the story below and answer questions 35 to 40.

from JULIE OF THE WOLVES

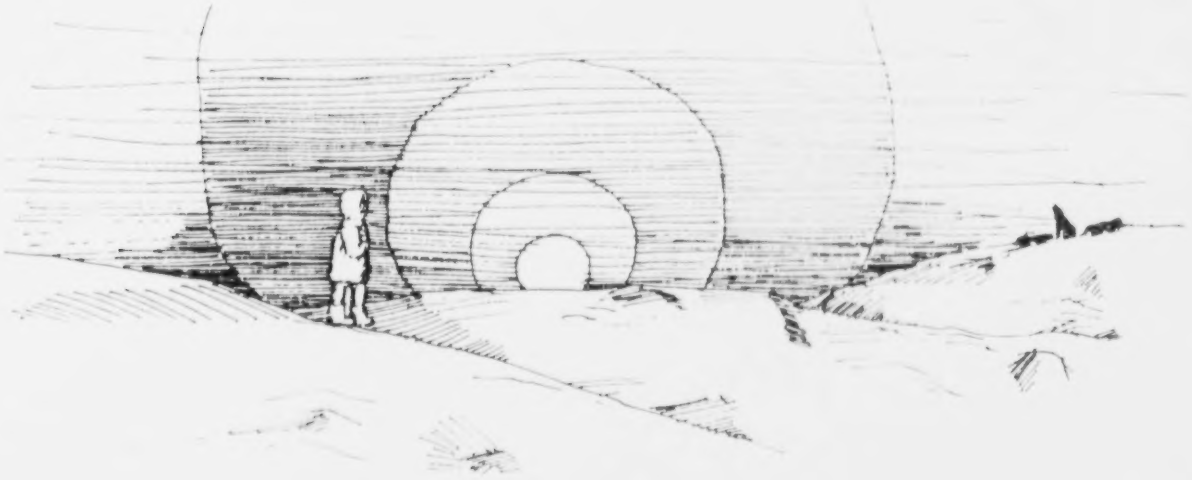
This is from the story of Miyax, a young Inuit girl, who struggles to survive alone on the Tundra after running away from a new home.

Miyax was lost. She had been lost without food for many sleeps on the North Slope of Alaska. The barren slope stretches for three hundred miles from the Brooks Range to the Arctic Ocean, and for more than eight hundred miles from the Chukchi to the Beaufort Sea. No roads cross it; ponds and lakes freckle its immensity. Winds scream across it, and the view in every direction is exactly the same. Somewhere in this cosmos was Miyax; and the very life in her body, its spark and warmth, depended upon these wolves for survival. And she was not so sure they would help.

Miyax stared hard at the regal black wolf, hoping to catch his eye. She must somehow tell him that she was starving and ask him for food. This could be done she knew, for her father, an Eskimo hunter, had done so. One year he had camped near a wolf den while on a hunt. When a month had passed and her father had seen no game, he told the leader of the wolves that he was hungry and needed food. The next night the wolf called him from far away and her father went to him and found a freshly killed caribou. Unfortunately, Miyax's father never explained to her how he had told the wolf of his needs. And not long afterward he paddled his kayak into the Bering Sea to hunt for seal, and he never returned.

She had been watching the wolves for two days, trying to discern which of their sounds and movements expressed goodwill and friendship. Most animals had such signals. The little Arctic ground squirrels flicked their tails sideways to notify others of their kind that they were friendly. By imitating this signal with her forefinger, Miyax had lured many a squirrel to her hand. If she could discover such a gesture for the wolves she would be able to make friends with them and share their food, like a bird or a fox.

Jean Craighead George



35. The phrase "many sleeps" (line 1) means

A. too much sleep
B. several months
C. lack of sleep
D. several days

36. The description that creates the CLEAREST picture of Miyax being lost is

A. "the North Slope of Alaska" (lines 1-2)
B. "The barren slope stretches for three hundred miles" (line 2)
C. "No roads cross it" (line 4)
D. "the view in every direction is exactly the same" (lines 5-6)

37. Miyax tries to attract the attention of "the regal black wolf" (line 9) because

A. she thinks he must be the leader
B. she knows he is the friendliest
C. he has helped her before
D. he has helped her father

38. Why had Miyax been watching the wolves for two days?

A. She was lost and lonely.
B. She was afraid to lose sight of them.
C. She wanted to communicate with them.
D. She was hoping they would protect her.

39. The word "lured" (line 22) means

A. coaxed
B. forced
C. helped
D. followed

40. In order to make friends with the wolves, Miyax knows she must

A. remember her father's advice
B. flick her forefinger sideways
C. act like a bird or a fox
D. learn the correct signal

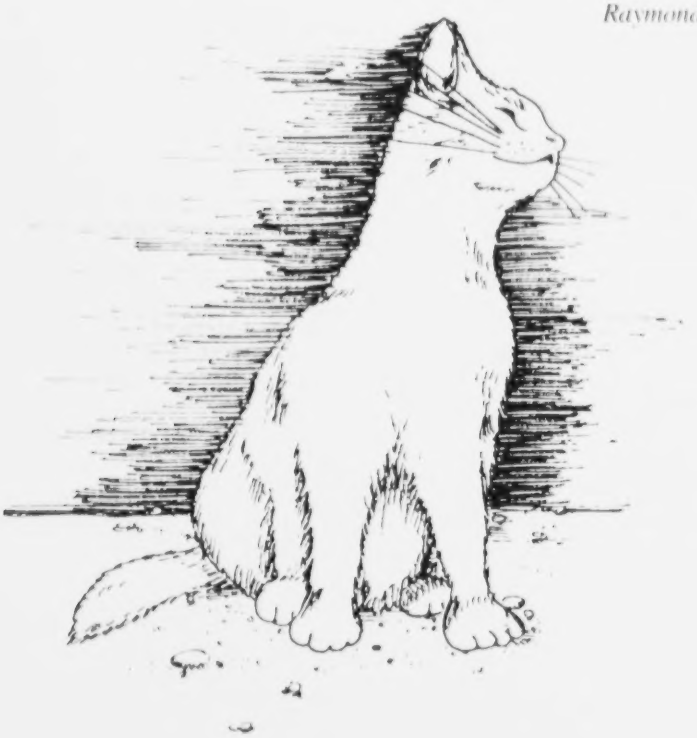
TURN THE PAGE

VIII. Read the poem below and answer questions 41 to 44.

WHITE CAT

I like to go to the stable after supper, —
Remembering fried potatoes and tarts of snow-apple jam —
And watch the men curry the horses,
And feed the pigs, and especially give the butting calves their milk.
When my father has finished milking he will say,
"Now Howard, you'll have to help me carry in these pails.
How will your mother be getting along
All this time without her little man?"
So we go in, and he carries them, but I help.
My father and I don't need the lanterns.
They hang on the wires up high back of the stalls
And we leave them for Ern and Dick.
It seems such a long way to the house in the dark.
But sometimes we talk, and always
There's the White Cat, that has been watching
While my father milked.
In the dark its gallop goes before like air,
Without any noise,
And it thinks we're awfully slow
Coming with the milk.

Raymond Knister



41. After supper, the boy MOST enjoys going to the stable to watch the men

A. curry the horses
B. feed the calves
C. carry the milk
D. feed the pigs

42. The father makes the boy feel important by

A. letting him carry the milk
B. helping him with his chores
C. telling him that he is needed
D. treating him as he treats Ern and Dick

43. The line that suggests that the boy feels safe with his father is

A. " 'Now Howard, you'll have to help me carry in these pails.' " (line 6)
B. "My father and I don't need the lanterns." (line 10)
C. "It seems such a long way to the house in the dark." (line 13)
D. "There's the White Cat, that has been watching while my father milked." (lines 15-16)

44. The boy says that the White Cat's gallop "goes before like air" (line 17) because the

A. night is windy
B. night is cloudy
C. cat is watching in the dark
D. boy can't see the cat's feet touch the ground

TURN THE PAGE

IX. Read the story below and answer questions 45 to 50.

from THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

Three animals, a bull terrier, a Labrador, and a Siamese cat are travelling together through the wilderness of northern Ontario.

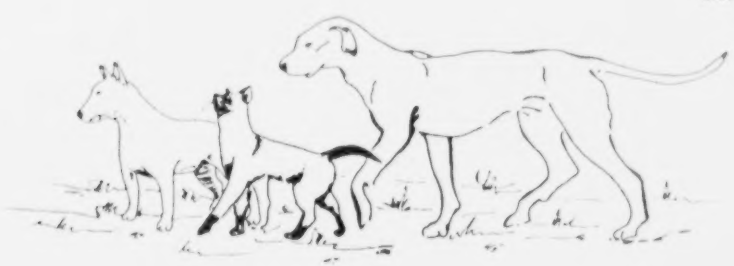
The following day the travellers came down from the hills to find themselves on the banks of a river running north and south. It was about a hundred feet across to the far bank, and although shallow enough in the ordinary way, was far too deep for the animals to cross without swimming. The young dog led the way downstream for some distance looking for a means of crossing, as it was obvious that his companions would not even wet their feet if they could possibly help it, both sharing a great dislike of water. Once or twice he plunged in and swam around, looking back at the other two, but they remained sitting close together on the bank, united in misery, and he was forced to continue trotting downstream, aware that it was the wrong direction.

It was lonely, uninhabited country, so that there were no bridges, and the river became wider as they trotted along the banks. After three or four miles the young dog could endure the frustration no longer; he plunged into the water and swam rapidly and strongly across to the far side, his tail streaming out behind like an otter's. He loved the water, and was as much at home in it as the other two hated and feared it. He stood on the far bank, barking encouragingly, but the old dog whined in such distress, the cat yowling in chorus, that he swam across again, paddling around in the shallows near the bank.

The old dog walked gingerly into the shallow water, shivering and miserable. Once more the Labrador swam the river, climbed out on the far side, shook himself, and barked. There was no mistaking the command.

The old dog took another reluctant step forward, whining piteously. The barking continued; again the terrier advanced; again the Labrador swam across to encourage him. Three times he swam across, and the third time the old dog waded in up to his chest and started swimming. He was not a very good swimmer; he swam in jerky rapid movements, his head held high out of the water, his little black eyes rolling fearfully; but he was a bull terrier, and he kept on, until at last he climbed out on the far side. His transports of joy on reaching dry land were like those of a shipwrecked mariner after six weeks at sea on a raft: he rushed in circles, he rolled on his back, he ran along low in the grass to dry himself, until finally he joined the Labrador on the bank to bark encouragingly at the cat.

Sheila Burnford



45. The phrase that suggests that the young dog's companions were reluctant to cross the river is

A. "came down from the hills" (line 1)
B. "he plunged in" (line 7)
C. "united in misery" (line 9)
D. "it was the wrong direction" (line 10)

46. Why were there no bridges for the animals to use?

A. There were no people living there.
B. There were no solid banks.
C. The river was too wide.
D. The river was in flood.

47. "The old dog walked gingerly into the shallow water" (line 19).
The word "gingerly" means

A. quietly
B. quickly
C. cautiously
D. courageously

48. "But he was a bull terrier" (line 27) means that the terrier

A. was a poor swimmer
B. was a good follower
C. feared the water
D. was determined

49. When the bull terrier reached dry land, he felt "transports of joy" (line 28). This phrase MAINLY expresses the bull terrier's

A. pleasure
B. daring
C. relief
D. pride

50. What is the MAIN feeling that the animals had for each other?

A. Loyalty toward each other
B. Joy in each other's safety
C. Impatience with each other
D. Anxiety for each other's safety

THE END

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